TERMS OF REFERENCE
Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly
Chair's Advisory and Oversight Group

1. Introduction

A. Purpose
This document outlines the terms of reference for the Chair's Advisory and Oversight Group of the Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation.

The Advisory and Oversight Group exists to assist the Chair of the Assembly by providing impartial advice on the proceedings of the Assembly, the design of its curriculum, including the range of presentations, and to respond to any concerns from Assembly members related to the conduct and impartiality of the Assembly itself.

The group will meet no fewer than four (4) times before and during the proceedings of the Assembly.

B. Group composition

1. The Advisory and Oversight Group will be composed of six (6) members. At least four (4) of the members shall have a demonstrable connection to the municipalities and/or broader region through their current or former work and residences, regardless of their current place of residence.*
2. The Advisory and Oversight Group should include members with expertise related to municipal governance, community engagement and volunteerism, the region's history and geography, historically underrepresented communities, and/or public administration.
3. Members of the Advisory and Oversight Group must affirm in writing that they are not a member of an existing advocacy group with a stated position on amalgamation; not currently elected to public office; not currently serving as political or municipal staff, as an officer of the court, or as a member of the Citizens' Assembly; and not working for a for-profit entity which routinely conducts business with either municipality.
4. The Chair of the Citizens' Assembly will propose a slate of members that satisfy these objectives. The Mayors of Victoria and Saanich or their designates will agree upon and approve the proposed slate.
5. If a member leaves the group, the Chair can select an alternate member at their discretion or leave the seat vacant. The selection process will follow the considerations described above.

C. Group governance

1. The Assembly Chair will chair the Advisory and Oversight Group.
2. Group meetings are not recorded or open to the public. Action minutes will be taken at each meeting.

3. Members of the Advisory and Oversight Group are unpaid and serve in a voluntary capacity.

4. Members of the Advisory and Oversight Group will not comment publicly on the proceedings of the Assembly or its recommendations, either during or after the Assembly's conclusion.

D. Group authority

1. The Advisory and Oversight Group has a consultatory and coordinating role rather than a decision-making role. Final approval of the Assembly's proceedings is under the authority of the Assembly Chair.

II. Group Responsibilities

A. Program and curriculum development

1. The Advisory and Oversight Group will review the Assembly's proposed curriculum and consider the range of presentations that will occur. The Group should be confident that the Assembly process is sensitive to the local context and that Assembly members will gain a reasonable understanding of the issues related to any potential amalgamation between the municipalities. They should also ensure that the members will have the opportunity to hear from a range of stakeholders who offer different perspectives.

B. Assembly attendance

1. Advisory and Oversight Group members are welcome but not expected to attend meetings of the Assembly as observers.

C. Citizens' Assembly member recourse

1. If a member of the Citizens' Assembly is dissatisfied with the process or the conduct of the Chair or any member of the facilitation team, the member can bring their concern to the Advisory and Oversight Group. The group will attempt to assist the member and, if appropriate, name a Group member who can work to resolve the concern in a reasonable fashion.

A note on the process of constituting the Advisory & Oversight Group:

The Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly Project Team was tasked by the municipalities with forming an advisory group to ensure a balance and diversity of perspectives in the Assembly's learning and deliberation process, and to strengthen the Assembly's legitimacy in the public view. Though it was initially suggested that the Advisory & Oversight Group should comprise members who currently live and/or work in Victoria or Saanich, we found that strict adherence to geography was a challenge and ultimately an unnecessary barrier to creating an ideal group. Instead, we focused on the more critical element of ensuring Group members bring the right balance of perspectives, experience, and expertise.

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